



August 18, 2011

Lookout Answers Your Questions

What Does the Law Say?

The Aug. 11 edition of *Lookout* provided some back to school safety tips. It did not address Florida laws regarding driving near or around school buses. However, a concerned reader submitted the following question:

"If the school bus is traveling in the opposite direction of a divided highway, do drivers have to stop?"

Section 316.172, Florida Statutes, states:

"The driver of a vehicle upon a divided highway with an unpaved space of at least 5 feet, a raised median, or a physical barrier is not required to stop when traveling in the opposite direction of a school bus which is stopped in accordance with the provisions of this section."

WARNING! Painted lines, pavement markings, and one- or two-way left-hand turn lanes do not constitute a barrier.

Lookout
Aug. 11, 2011

Kids are back in school
August is Back to School Safety Month. To celebrate the occasion, Lookout compiled a list of Back to School safety tips.

BE ALERT! Local schools are back in session

For children walking to school or the bus stop:

- Plan the most direct route with the fewest street crossings and, if possible, with intersections that have crossing guards.
- Walk the route with your child beforehand. Tell children to stay away from parks, vacant lots, fields and other places where there are only a few people.
- Teach your child to never talk to strangers or accept rides or gifts from strangers. Remember, a stranger is anyone you or your child don't know well or trust.
- Be sure your child walks to and from school with a sibling, friend, or neighbor.

For children riding the school bus:

- Instruct your child not to bend down in front of the bus to tie shoes or pickup objects because the driver may not see him or her before accelerating.
- Teach children to arrive at the bus stop early, stay out of the street, wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before approaching the street, watch for cars, and avoid the driver's blind spot.
- Remind children to stay seated at all times and keep their heads and arms inside the bus while it is in motion. Children should wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before attempting to exit and then exit only from the front using the handrail. It also is a good idea to cross the street at least 10 feet (or 10 giant steps) in front of the bus.
- Teach your kids, whether walking, biking, or riding the bus to school, to obey all traffic signals, signs and traffic officers.

For motorists:

- Slow down and be especially alert in residential neighborhoods and school zones.
- Take extra time to look for kids at intersections, on medians, and on curbs.
- Enter and exit driveways and alleys slowly and carefully.
- Watch for children on and near the road in the morning and after school hours.
- Reduce any distractions inside your car so you can concentrate on the road and surroundings. Put down your phone and don't talk or text while driving.
- If you drive your child to school, and he/she is crying, but you know he/she is going to be fine, keep driving. You can try to sing lullabies, but if you want to check, you need to find a gas station or other safe place – not a shoulder – to pull over. Be careful not to look continuously in your rearview mirror.

Nearly 80 percent of crashes and 65 percent of near-crashes involve some form of driver inattention within three seconds of the event.

If you have questions, comments, or a topic you would like to see addressed, e-mail Reneka Whicker at reneka.a.whicker@nasa.gov or Brian Gloade at brian.i.gloade@nasa.gov.

Did YOU Know



A Brevard County school bus crashed on the first day back to school last Wednesday. The Florida Highway Patrol reported that the 67-year-old bus driver was transporting 26 students to Viera High School Wednesday morning when he experienced some kind of medical episode and lost consciousness. The school bus veered off the road and into a retention pond.

The front end of the bus submerged itself in several feet of water while the back end remained on land.

The students exited the rear emergency door. Thankfully, no one was seriously injured.

For safety tips concerning school bus safety, check out the Aug. 11 edition of *Lookout* at <http://sotl.ksc.nasa.gov/>

Lookout
June 16, 2011

STOP! Emergency Vehicles and Security Escorts

A KSC employee recently contacted Lookout to express concern about drivers on center property who often fail to follow established protocol with respect to emergency vehicles. The employee witnessed three instances where privately owned vehicle operators obstructed the path of oncoming emergency or security escort vehicles causing those drivers to take evasive action.

Florida Statute 316.126 "Operation of vehicles and actions of pedestrians on approach of authorized emergency vehicle" states:

(1)(a) Upon the immediate approach of an authorized emergency vehicle, while en route to meet an existing emergency, the driver of every other vehicle shall, when such emergency vehicle is giving audible signals by siren, exhaust whistle, or other adequate device, or visible signals by the use of displayed blue or red lights, yield the right-of-way to the emergency vehicle and shall immediately proceed to a position parallel to, and as close as reasonable to the closest edge of the curb of the roadway, clear of any intersection and shall stop and remain in position until the authorized emergency vehicle has passed, unless otherwise directed by any law enforcement officer.

(b) When an authorized emergency vehicle making use of any visual signals is parked or a wrecker displaying amber rotating or flashing lights is performing a recovery or loading on the roadside, the driver of every other vehicle, as soon as it is safe:

1. Shall vacate the lane closest to the emergency vehicle or wrecker when driving on an interstate highway or other highway with two or more lanes traveling in the direction of the emergency vehicle or wrecker, except when otherwise directed by a law enforcement officer.
2. Shall slow to a speed that is 20 miles per hour less than the posted speed limit when the posted speed limit is 25 miles per hour or greater; or travel at 5 miles per hour when the posted speed limit is 20 miles per hour or less, when driving on a two-lane road, except when otherwise directed by a law enforcement officer.

The statute also states that violation of this section is a noncriminal traffic infraction, punishable as either a moving violation or as a pedestrian violation. According to the Florida Department of Motor Vehicles website and the Brevard County Clerk of Courts, a moving violation could result in at least 3 points against your license and a fine of more than \$100.

KSC adopts the vehicular and pedestrian traffic laws of the state of Florida, as set forth in Florida Statute 316, "State Uniform Traffic Control." Violations may be enforced by the issuance of KSC citations, assessment of points, and suspension and revocation of KSC driving privileges. Additional administrative disciplinary actions may be taken against federal and contractor employees, as well.

SLOW DOWN, FOLLOW TRAFFIC SAFETY REQUIREMENTS AND MAKE WAY FOR EMERGENCY AND OPERATIONAL ESCORT VEHICLES!!

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The "Emergency Vehicles and Security Escorts" article in the June 16 edition of *Lookout* quoted the Florida Statute requiring drivers to stop for emergency vehicles. A *Lookout* reader asked for clarification regarding the article:

"If you are traveling on a two-way road (one lane in each direction) and an emergency vehicle is coming behind you, you pull over as described in the law. However, is it just courtesy or is it law that the vehicles in the on-coming (other lane) traffic heading toward the fire truck to also pull over?"

The Florida Highway Patrol confirmed that Florida Statute 316.126 affects all vehicles on the highways regardless of traveling direction or whether or not it is a divided median highway.

The statute states, "the driver of every other vehicle shall. . . yield the right-of-way to the emergency vehicle and shall immediately proceed to a position parallel to, and as close as reasonable to the closest edge of the curb of the roadway, clear of any intersection and shall stop and remain in position until the authorized emergency vehicle has passed, unless otherwise directed by any law enforcement officer." This is a mandate for all drivers.

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